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EDUCATION WEEK

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Mass. Requiring Lead Screening For School Entry

Evidence Ties Exposure To Learning Disabilities

By Ellen Flax

Responding to mounting evidence that children who have been exposed to lead are at higher risk of developing learning disabilities, Massachussetts has become the first state to require entering kindergartners to show that they have been tested for lead poisoning.

A state regulation, which went into effect last spring and first applied to the class entering kindergarten this month, requires parents to submit medical records to school officials to prove that their children's blood-lead level has been tested at least once.

The program, the most comprehensive lead-screening effort in the country, follows extensive research showing that young children can be adversely affected by even very low levels of lead, including amounts well below those normally associated with lead poisoning.

According to these findings, children who are exposed to lead—typically from lead-based paint—may have impaired nervous-system functioning, delayed cognitive development, and lower I.Q. scores.

"Lead poisoning is totally preventable," said Herbert Needleman, a professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh's medical school and a leading researcher on the subject.

"What we need to do is to get it out of housing," he said. "But until we do, we have to pick it up in the children."

According to the Massachusetts regula-

Continued on Page 24

The Orlando Sentinel/Tom Burton

Richard Ellenburg, a kindergarten teacher in Orlando, Fla., says "people are just flabbergasted" when he discusses plans for a Ph.D. in early-childhood education.

Early-Childhood Educators Bemoan The Scarcity of Males in Teaching

By Deborah L. Cohen

As the only male teacher at the Westwood School in Dalton, Ga., Jimmy E. Nations has found himself in some awkward situations.

The gray-bearded 1st-grade teacher, who returned to the elementary-school classroom after an 18-year stint as a school administrator, enjoys recounting one such incident, involving a consultant who visited the school.

"She asked me if I was the principal," he recalls, "and when I said no, she said, 'Will you come get these things out of my car?' "

"She assumed that if I was not the principal, I must be the custodian," explains Mr. Nations, who says he had begun rearranging chairs in the conference room at the visitor's request when the school principal walked in and formally introduced them.

"She turned every shade in the rainbow," the teacher says. "She was so embarrassed that she had made a very stereotypical kind of assumption."

Such assumptions—coupled with low salaries, a perceived lack of status, and fears stirred by highly publicized cases of child sexual abuse involving male teachers—have helped to keep early-childhood education a predominantly female field.

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Faced With Cuts In Funds, Seattle Postpones Rules

Guidelines Would Revise Schools' Racial Makeup

By Julie A. Miller

Faced with the loss of $3.2 million in federal magnet-schools aid and as much as $10 million in state construction funds, the Seattle school board voted last week to postpone for a year changes in its student-assignment guidelines that it had approved a week earlier.

The new guidelines on the racial makeup of schools are intended to reduce mandatory busing and to allow more students to attend the schools of their choice.

But critics contend that the change would resegregate the city's schools, and federal officials think the guidelines might make Seattle ineligible for the magnet-schools program.

A coalition led by the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People plans to challenge the change in court if and when it is implemented.

Under a "controlled choice" plan adopted in 1988, the district earmarks slots for white and minority students at each school and grants student choices that meet racial-balance guidelines.

The guidelines reinstated last week allow no more than 50 percent of a school's enrollment to come from a single minority group, and limit each school's total population to 70 percent minority or 65 percent white.

The new guidelines—which are now to be implemented in the 1991-92 school year—would allow 75 percent of a school's population to come from a single racial group, and would also allow a school to enroll only minority students if they came from at least two minority groups, such as blacks and Asians. The school board voted 4 to 3 on Sept. 5 to approve the guidelines.

"I want to challenge the idea that to be

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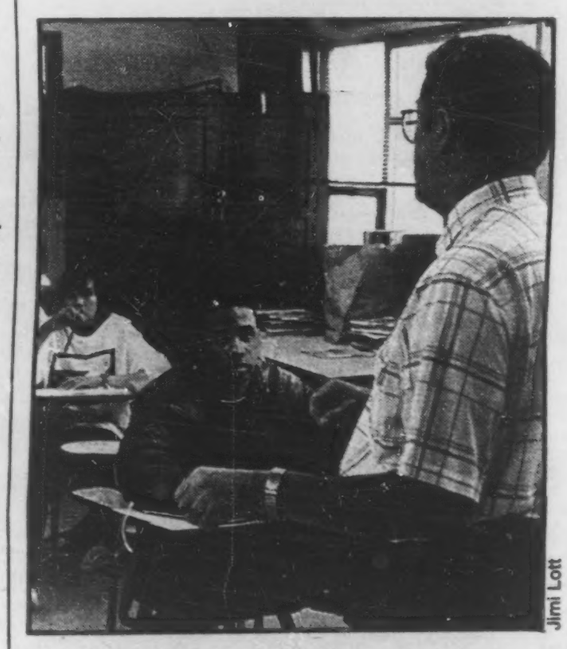

Jimi Lott

Jim Adams teaches a radio class at Nathan Hale High School in Seattle, one of the district's magnet schools.

Even as Gaps in Data Are Filled, Teacher-Supply Debate Lingers

By Ann Bradley

While several recent studies suggest that teachers may not yet be leaving the profession in the large numbers that have been forecast for the 1990's, concern over whether the nation has an adequate supply of qualified teachers has by no means abated.

"The question is how disparate is supply and demand," said Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor of curriculum and teaching at Columbia University's Teachers College, "not whether there's a gap."

What appears to be happening, experts interviewed recently said, is that teachers who are eligible for retirement are chosing to remain on the job longer as a result of the substantial salary gains most experienced during the 1980's.

At the same time, they said, evidence is mounting that the number of teachers trained in schools of education is on the rise, due in part to the increased attention given to making teaching a more attractive profession.

And recent studies show that the teaching ranks are being swelled by large numbers of teachers returning to the profession after a hiatus from the classroom and by a much smaller, though growing, number of individuals entering teaching through an alternative route.

C. Emily Feistritzer, an independent education researcher who has maintained that no widespread shortages will occur, recently weighed in on the subject with a new report portraying teaching as a "revolving-door profession" that is attracting more people than the number choosing to leave. Several newspapers printed the story, with one headline proclaiming: "Fears of Teacher Shortage Fading."

Last spring, the National Center for Education Statistics released data from a new set of integrated surveys indicating that the number of teachers leaving their jobs may be much lower than some researchers had assumed.

"It is clear that several things have hap-

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Also in the news

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Average scores on the revamped American College Testing Program test remained stable in 1990.

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The Virginia Board of Education has drastically altered the mission of the state education department.

19 New Focus
Educators are hailing a major overhaul of federal vocational-education programs approved by the Congress.

IN SUMMARY

A Plum for the Board
Officials of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards last week were celebrating the award of a $3-million grant to help publicize its work among educators. **Page 5.**

Teenagers and Steroids
More than 250,000 adolescents have used steroids illegally and the ranks of those who use the potentially dangerous substances may be growing, a pair of federal reports conclude. **Page 6.**

'Latchkey' Stress
Children who care for themselves after school are much more likely than those with more adult supervision to be under stress, to be afraid when left alone, and to feel angry, a new study says. **Page 6.**

Boston School-Board Woes
Several efforts to ask Boston voters this November to approve a restructuring of their often-criticized school committee appeared to have reached a dead end last week. **Page 7.**

Spotlight on the Arts
A commission formed to give music and arts instruction a higher profile in the national education-reform debate is scheduled this week to begin a series of three regional hearings. **Page 9.**

Home-Schooling Controversy
A test that South Carolina requires parents to pass in order to be allowed to teach their children at home was called "insulting and unjust" during a court hearing last week. **Page 16.**

Spending Bill Advances
A Senate subcommittee last week approved a 15.2 percent boost in overall Education Department spending for next year, but only a meager increase for special education. **Page 20.**

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ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

Nike Donates $1 Million to N.F.I.E. Dropout-Prevention Grant Program

Nike Inc., the athletic shoe and apparel manufacturer, has donated $1 million to the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education to create a dropout-prevention grant program for teachers.

The "Just Do It" grants will go to "stimulate teachers to come up with creative grassroots programs to motivate kids to stay in school," said Philip Knight, Nike's founder and chief executive officer.

Winners will receive grants of $5,000 to $25,000 over three years. Criteria include programs that are designed and implemented by teachers; that encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning; that challenge teachers to find ways to create supportive environments to foster academic success; and that tie self-esteem activities to academic achievement.

Applications will be available next month with a deadline of April 1. The first winners will be named in June with the projects slated to begin next fall.

DISTRICTS

Chicago-Area Firms Are Indicted In Milk Bid-Rigging Investigation

Three Chicago-area companies and their executives have been charged with rigging school-milk bids worth more than $4.3 million, the U.S. Justice Department said.

The federal indictment contends the companies and other unnamed individuals conspired to allocate among themselves the contracts to supply milk to public schools, to fix the prices, and to rig their bids for the contracts to the Chicago Board of Education.

Distributors named in the indictment were: C&C Dairy of Palos Heights, Ill.; Cloverleaf Farms Distributors of Crestwood, Ill.; and Roger Gillund Dairy Service of Country Club Hills, Ill.

Roger Gillund, president of Roger Gillund Dairy Service; Terrence Gillund, owner and operator of Terry Gillund Dairy Service; and William Gillund, owner and operator of William Gillund Dairy Service, were arraigned Sept. 11.

Michael Bailey, president and chief executive officer of Cloverleaf Farms Distributors; Robert Bailey, chairman of Cloverleaf; and Michael Stajszczak, general manager of C&C Dairy, were scheduled to be arraigned Sept. 17, a spokesman in the Justice Department's antitrust division said.

William Gillund was charged with one count of mail fraud; the other five defendants were charged with one antitrust violation and two counts of mail fraud.

■ **The Granite, Utah, school district has asked a federal court to support its decision to keep a severely handicapped elementary-school student from attending regular classes.**

The 6-year-old girl, identified as Shannon M. in court papers, has congenital neuromuscular atrophy and scoliosis. She is confined to a motorized wheelchair and breathes through a tube, documents filed with the court say. She also requires the constant care of a nurse, which would cost the district $30,000 a year if the child attended regular school.

The appeal was filed after rulings by a local hearing officer and state education officials that the district must provide the nurse under the federal law that requires a free public education for all handicapped students.

The district argues that the provision of a full-time nurse goes beyond education-related services and that it should be allowed to provide private tutoring for the girl in her home.

■ **Although the city of Philadelphia is facing insolvency, a $44-million package of tax increases approved last spring by the city council has enabled the Philadelphia school district to raise $120 million in short-term bond notes to meet expenses until the new tax money is collected,** school officials say.

The district reported having no trouble selling the notes, in contrast to the city, which has been trying unsuccessfully to sell $375 million in bonds to stave off bankruptcy. The district's budget for this year is balanced, officials report, and suppliers are being paid on time.

Because of the tax increase, investment services gave the district's short-term bond notes the highest possible rating, according to district officials. But the district's rating for long-term notes is lower because of an anticipated budget shortfall for the next fiscal year.

■ **Striking teachers in the South Orange-Maplewood, N.J., school district have been threatened with jail terms if they do not return to work.**

Superior Court Judge Irwin Kimmelman ordered 15 union officials and bargaining-team members to begin serving 30-day sentences in the Essex County jail late last week for defying his back-to-work order.

A hearing on a request for a stay of that order was scheduled for last Friday.

The judge also ordered that for every day of work teachers skipped beginning last Friday, they would spend a weekend in jail.

He also fined the 572-member union, a local affiliate of the National Education Association, $35,000 and imposed $500 fines on the 15 people he found in contempt of court.

He then ordered both sides to begin bargaining sessions and to continue until their differences were resolved.

The union has been on strike since Sept. 5 over issues of salary and working conditions.

The last time teachers in New Jersey, which bans strikes by public employees, were jailed was in Teaneck in 1982. At that time, about 150 people were locked up in trailers during school hours for three days.

■ **A high school teacher in Evansville, Ind., has sued the local school board to allow him to teach a lesson on a four-**

STATES

Teachers Who Fail Licensing Test Due Benefits, Fla. Court Rules

Florida teachers who fail the state certification examination are entitled to unemployment compensation, the state Supreme Court has ruled.

In a decision handed down earlier this month, the court found that Ernest Washington, a teacher in the Gulf County school system, had made a good-faith effort to meet the district's conditions of employment. Teaching with a temporary license, Mr. Washington was fired after three unsuccessful attempts to pass the test.

The justices said employees can be denied unemployment benefits only if they quit their jobs without good cause or engage in misconduct. Mr. Washington had done neither, the court said.

Sydney McKenzie, general counsel to the state education department, said the ruling may inhibit school districts from hiring uncertified teachers. It may also lead to an increase in the amount employers must contribute to the state's unemployment-compensation fund.

For Good Measure

Stephen Rose

From left, Maya Kumar, Donna Place, Ian Henderson, and Dan Reuman measure a loggerhead turtle that washed ashore on Cape Cod. The four are participating in the gifted-and-talented program run by the National Marine Fisheries Service Aquarium at Woods Hole, Mass. The program is for students with an interest in marine biology.

letter obscenity during his semantics class.

The suit, filed Sept. 4 by Jim Wootton, a teacher at Central High School, contends that the Evansville-Vanderburgh County School Board violated the state's "open door" law when it banned the word during an Aug. 20 public hearing. Mr. Wootton was told that he could no longer teach a semantics lesson on the four-letter word.

In the suit, Mr. Wootton, with the support of the Evansville Teachers Association and the Indiana Teachers Association, alleges that the matter was decided in a secret closed session on Aug. 6 before the board voted in public to ban the word, said Jack VanStone, a laywer with the Evansville Teachers Association.

Indiana law requires government bodies to conduct their business in public meetings, Mr. VanStone said. The school board could use a closed executive session only for certain subjects, such as personnel matters.

Issues of academic freedom and freedom of speech raised during the public meeting are not raised by the suit, Mr. VanStone said. The case hinges entirely on the open-meetings law, he said.

A parent filed a complaint at the end of last school year about the use of the word in Mr. Wootton's classroom.

■ **Advocates for a 4-year-old disabled girl are pressing Los Angeles school officials to make the child's neighborhood school—and every other school in the district—accessible to children with handicaps.**

In a federal class action filed this month, advocates for Xochitl Soto say school officials should build a ramp into the pre-kindergarten classroom at the Bushnell Way elementary school three blocks from her home.

The child, paralyzed since infancy by a stray bullet from a drive-by gang shooting, cannot negotiate the four steps leading into the classroom with her wheelchair.

School officials, contending that the school was unsafe because of its hilly location and because it is more than one story tall, had proposed sending the child to a school three miles away. That school, which enrolls a large number of special-education students, has access for the handicapped.

"She doesn't need special education," said Sande Buhai Pond, a lawyer for the Western Law Center for the Handicapped, which is representing the child. "All she needs is a ramp."

The lawsuit also asks district officials to abandon their policy of limiting such architectural improvements to a few selected schools in favor of a plan for making all schools more accessible for the physically disabled.

A hearing on the matter was scheduled for last Friday.

AP/Wide World Photos

Christopher Armour, 4, and his brother Vaughn, 5, walk to school in New York City wearing bullet-resistant clothing.

Dressing For Danger

Responding to a rash of random gunshot killings of children in New York City this summer, a company has begun marketing bullet-resistant vests and other protective items for pupils.

Stephen L. D'Andrilli, a former New York City police officer who is now president of Guardian Group International Corporation, says the New York-based company has already taken more than three dozen orders from parents of schoolchildren.

The company markets protective clothing and other items ranging in price from $250 to $600. A jacket made with Kevlar 129 protective pads sells for $450.

"Six months ago, the idea of bullet-resistant clothing for one's child would have been considered irrational," Mr. D'Andrilli says. "The fact that New Yorkers and people throughout the world need protective clothing, especially for children, is a terrible reflection of the collapse of law and order in our society." —M.W.

UPDATE

■ **A federal judge has approved a plan to transfer 10 minority students from the Kansas City, Mo., schools to a suburban system, but concerns over court-ordered oversight of the transfers may cause the effort to collapse.**

U.S. District Judge Russell G. Clark ordered the oversight Sept. 5 when he approved the plan to transfer the students to the Missouri City school district, the only one of more than 20 districts that agreed to participate in a voluntary-interdistrict transfer program. *(See Education Week, May 2, 1990.)*

Last week, the Missouri City school board voted to refuse the oversight by the state's desegregation-monitoring committee, according to Belinda Turner, the board's vice president.

School-board members "don't want to see their authority impinged," said Jay Jackson, district superintendent and principal of the participating elementary school. "It's a simple but deep philosophical issue."

Both Mr. Jackson and Ms. Turner said they would withdraw from the state transfer program to avoid the committee's oversight and search for private funding to keep the 10 students in school.

If the district refuses to comply with the oversight, approximately $100,000 in state funds could be cut off, Mr. Jackson said. If no funding alternatives can be found, the students might have to return to their inner-city schools, he added.

Eugene E. Eubanks, the desegregation committee's chairman, said his panel only wants access to information that would safeguard the minority students' well-being.

Judge Clark could issue a ruling on Missouri City's revised transfer plan by the end of this week, a spokesman for the judge said.

■ **New York State's attorney general has appealed a federal-court ruling that barred disclosure of test questions under that state's "truth in testing" law.**

Acting in a case brought by the Association of American Medical Colleges, U.S. District Judge Neal P. McCurn ruled in January that the disclosure of test questions and answers conflicted with federal copyright law. Citing that ruling, testing agencies later sued and won a settlement that permitted them to administer college-admissions tests without disclosure. *(See Education Week, Jan. 31, 1990.)*

Daniel Smirlock, an assistant attorney general for the state, said that, in his ruling, Judge McCurn did not consider "factually controversial" evidence about the effect of disclosure on the value of the test questions and answers. "All we are saying is, you should have heard the evidence," Mr. Smirlock said.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit could consider the case as early as Oct. 29, he added.

■ **School officials in Jersey City, N.J., have taken the city to court to collect $14.9 million in payments they allege are overdue.**

In a lawsuit filed this month, officials of the state-run district asked the New Jersey Superior Court to order the city to pay the balance of the $90.9 million in local tax revenues due the district during the 1989-90 academic year.

In turn, the city has sued the state, claiming it cannot complete its budget process until the state sets local aid figures.

The city was scheduled to pay its first installment of $7.3 million for the current school year last Friday.

"The practical problem is how much cash can we put our hands on," said Charlotte Kitler, a lawyer for the district. "Right now, we have enough cash to get us halfway through September."

Since the state declared the district academically bankrupt and took over its operation last October, Ms. Kitler said the 27,000-student school system has eliminated 117 positions, saving more than $1 million, and reorganized the central administration. *(See Education Week, April 18, 1990.)*

■ **Left-side emergency doors will be standard equipment on the biggest buses Kentucky school officials buy over the next year,** the state school board decided last week.

In addition to the extra emergency door on buses seating 60 or more passengers, the state board will require a fourth pull-out emergency window on all new mid-size school buses.

The state estimates that districts will buy more than 200 transit-type buses with the new escape door over the next year. State education department officials last week were unable to say how much the new safety features would increase the cost of a bus.

The added escape routes and a handful of minor interior safety modifications are the result of an intense statewide bus-safety debate following a May 1988 church-bus crash in Carrollton, Ky. Twenty-seven people died after a collision and fire blocked the front exit and passengers were unable to reach the rear door. *(See Education Week, May 25, 1988.)*

PEOPLE

■ **Jay B. Taggart** has been named the new superintendent of public instruction for Utah.

Mr. Taggart, 62, is a 36-year veteran of schools in the state, having taught in three districts and been superintendent of two others.

He succeeds James R. Moss, who resigned in May to head a new business-education partnership in the state.

DIMENSIONS

High-School Sports

Football remains the most popular boys' sport, and basketball the most popular girls' sport in high schools, according to the latest annual survey by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Based on data for the 1989-90 school year, the survey shows that, even though nearly 4,000 fewer boys played football last year than the year before, the sport drew more participants than its nearest rival, basketball.

In the biggest change recorded in boys' sports, baseball replaced track and field as the third most popular sport.

In girls' sports, basketball continued to grow in popularity, with more than 10,000 additional girls playing the sport last year. Golf also gained nearly 10,000 participants last year to replace slow-pitch softball as the 10th most popular girls' sport.

Over all, some 5.3 million students—3.4 million boys and 1.9 million girls—participated in school-sponsored athletics last year, according to the survey.

More information is available in the 1990-91 National Federation Handbook, which will be available soon from the federation, P.O. Box 20626, Kansas City, Mo. 64195.

Ten Most Popular Boys' and Girls' Sports, 1989-90

Boys' Sports	Participants	Girls' Sports	Participants
Football	947,757	Basketball	389,688
Basketball	517,271	Track & Field (Outdoor)	308,810
Baseball	413,581	Volleyball	293,688
Track & Field (Outdoor)	405,684	Softball (Fast Pitch)	205,040
Wrestling	233,856	Tennis	128,076
Soccer	220,777	Soccer	111,711
Cross Country	155,806	Cross Country	104,876
Tennis	136,939	Swimming & Diving	84,760
Golf	122,998	Field Hockey	50,237
Swimming & Diving	85,112	Golf	40,418

Source: National Federation of State High School Associations

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In Rochester, Skepticism, Confusion Greet News of 'Revolutionary' Pact

By Ann Bradley

When Rochester, N.Y., school-district officials and the president of the city's teachers' union announced last week that they had agreed on a new three-year contract that will base teachers' pay strictly on performance, their euphoria at what they termed a "revolutionary" contract was short-lived.

Confusion immediately swept through the Rochester community over exactly how much the agreement would cost and whether the new system for granting teachers' raises would truly be an improvement.

From the Urban League of Rochester to the editorial boards of the city's two daily newspapers to the office of Mayor Thomas P. Ryan, skepticism greeted the announcement of the new contract.

Despite the community's misgivings, the board of education approved the contract by a 4-to-3 vote Thursday night. The full membership of the Rochester Teachers Association was scheduled to vote on the contract Sept. 24.

"This is a contract that both sides enter into with a great deal of apprehension," said Michael A. Fernandez, a school-board member who voted in favor of the contract.

"Both sides know that this is the right thing to do, in terms of linking pay to performance," he added. "But we have to make certain that it doesn't appear that administrators are running roughshod over teachers and that teachers haven't slipped one by the community."

This year, all teachers will receive 4.2 percent cost-of-living raises, in addition to longevity payments of a flat $3,183. Their raises for the next two years will be determined by a new evaluation system that heavily involves teachers in judging their colleagues' performance as well as their own.

Some of the reaction to the agreement stemmed from the fact that it is theoretically possible for a teacher to be paid as much as $86,816 in the last year of the new contract.

School-district officials were reluctant to predict what the contract would cost beyond the first year's $11 million, because the totals will depend on the results of the new

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Justice Souter?

AP/Wide World Photos

Questions still remain over the U.S. Supreme Court nominee's views on key education issues. For a review of the confirmation hearings and a preview of the Court's upcoming term, see page 20.

2 Groups Laying Plans To Develop National Exams

Tests Inadequate, Say Bush's Council, Center

By Robert Rothman

Contending that the current array of national, state, and local tests is inadequate to spur improvements in education, two prominent groups are laying plans to develop a national examination that all students would take.

Members of President Bush's Education Policy Advisory Committee this month are considering a proposal to convene a panel of experts to draw up examinations that could be put in place "within the next few years."

And the National Center on Education and the Economy, which in June issued a report calling for all students to attain a national standard based on a series of assessments, is exploring ways to follow up on that recommendation.

Although the proposals are being developed separately, both are aimed at raising student achievement by requiring all students to demonstrate competency. If they are implemented, said Paul H. O'Neill, chairman of the President's panel, schools will have better information than they do now about where to place resources to make improvements.

"My own view," said Mr. O'Neill, chief executive officer of the Aluminum Company of America, "is that we need a test that can be given to individual children, the results of which can be given to the child and teacher to help better inform all parties how the child is gaining the competencies necessary to be a participating citizen."

"We have some good tests that tell us something," he added, "but they don't tell us in a way that would allow us to make specific interventions in the process to do something. They tell us we're not doing very well; they don't suggest why not."

In addition, said Lauren B. Resnick, a trustee of the center on education and the

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Federal Rule Seen Snarling Welfare-Education Efforts

By Deborah L. Cohen

As states scramble to set in motion education and job-training services required by Oct. 1 under the federal welfare-reform law, they are encountering what many describe as an unforeseen obstacle: a stipulation that the funds be channeled through state welfare agencies.

"The magnitude of the problem is just beginning to be realized by states," said Judith Thorman, deputy director of the Washington office of the state of Illinois.

The Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training program, created under the Family Support Act enacted by the Congress in 1988, is designed to help welfare recipients become self-sufficient by offering education, training, and other support services.

The education services—which must include high-school and General Educational Development certificate programs, remedial education, and instruction for those lacking English proficiency—are considered essential to boosting clients' employability and earnings potential.

The law requires that states establish JOBS programs by Oct. 1 and offer them statewide by 1992.

Many states are already operating JOBS-like programs or have appropriated funds to state education or training departments to launch or expand their efforts.

But officials in several states say they fear that their plans could be undercut by a stipulation by the U.S. Health and Human Services Department that, to qualify for federal matching funds, states must ensure that state JOBS dollars are controlled by the welfare-administering agency.

In many cases, at least part of the JOBS dollars have already been appropriated to education, labor, or other agencies charged with training activities. In such cases, H.H.S. officials have suggested, these funds must be physically transferred to the state welfare agency and then redisbursed in order to draw federal matching funds.

Such transfers, state welfare and education officials contend, can be cumbersome and complicated, and, in some instances, conflict with state law or require additional legislative action.

Just as troubling, these officials maintain, is the fact that the H.H.S. rule runs counter to the welfare-reform law's goal of

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Also in the news

5 **Bus Stop?**
The Cleveland board has asked a federal court to end the district's desegregation suit.

17 **Revitalizing Voc. Ed.**
Businesses in Arizona may pay higher taxes to get more control.

Federal Laws Failing To Narrow Educational Gaps, Report Claims

By Mark Pitsch

WASHINGTON—Two key federal education laws dating back to the Johnson era have failed to meet their purpose of expanding the educational opportunities of students from low-income families, a report issued by the American College Testing Program contends.

Despite billions of dollars having been pumped into the Chapter 1 compensatory-education and Title 4 student-financial-assistance programs over the last 25 years, it says, the gaps in educational attainment between the nation's wealthiest and poorest young people "are very large, pervasive, persistent, and growing."

"This, in my view, represents giant steps back from progress in trying to equalize educational opportunities," Thomas G. Mortenson, the A.C.T. researcher who conducted the study, said in an interview.

Although the work builds on other studies of the federal programs, Mr. Mortenson said this was the first time a researcher had assessed the success of both federal laws in one study. He presented his findings here last week at a conference of the National Council of Education Opportunity Associations.

The author broke down Census Bureau income data into four equal family quartiles for each year from 1970 to 1989 to compare students' rates of high-school graduation, college participation, and college graduation.

"When all the evidence points in the same direction, you say, 'Shoot, it's up to me to put up a counterargument,' and I don't think [critics] can," Mr. Mortenson said.

But at least two other researchers last week questioned the validity of concluding that because graduation- and participation-rate gaps between the wealthiest and poorest students have remained relatively the same during the last 20 years, the two largest federal education programs are not working.

For his analysis, Mr. Mortenson looked at unmarried 18- to 24-year-olds by level of family income.

In 1989, the income figures were divided this way: less than $20,000 in annual income (the first quartile); incomes between $20,000 and $35,400 (the second quartile); between $35,400 and $58,100 (the third quartile); and more than $58,100 (the fourth quartile).

Continued on Page 12